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ABSTRACT

The test manual for the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) test has been prepared for teachers, counselors, and others responsible for interpreting SLEP test scores. The SLEP is designed to assess the proficiency in English of students entering grades 7 through 12 whose native language is not English. As a test of understanding written and spoken English, the SLEP is available to secondary schools in the United States and overseas. This manual contains the following: (1) an overview of the SLEP program; (2) general instructions for the test; (3) general information about and specific instructions for administering the test; (4) scoring the answer sheets; (5) interpreting the SLEP scores; (6) statistical information; (7) language proficiency levels; (8) the relationship between the SLEP and the Test of English as a Foreign Language; (9) additional factors to consider in using SLEP scores; and (10) an annotated list of nine references. Sixteen data tables are included. (SLD)

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SLEP Test Manual

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Please address correspondence concerning the SLEP program or test use to:
Educational Testing Service
SLEP Program Office
P.O. Box 6155
Princeton, NJ 08541, USA

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PREFACE

The SLEP **Test Manual** has been prepared for guidance counselors, English-as-a-second-language teachers, department chairs, evaluation specialists, foreign student advisers, admissions officers, and others responsible for interpreting SLEP scores. In addition to providing information about score interpretation, the **Manual** describes the test program and includes instructions for administering the test.

This is the fifth edition of the **Manual**. As new test forms are offered, it will be updated to provide score and test users with recent research findings and statistical information.

Suggestions for improving the SLEP **Test Manual** will be most welcome.

SLEP Program Director
International Testing &
Training Programs
Educational Testing Service
P.O. Box 6155
Princeton, NJ 08541-6155, USA

Overview of the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) Program

The Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP ®) test is a measure of ability in two primary areas: understanding spoken English and understanding written English. It is designed for use with students entering grades seven through twelve whose native language is other than English.

Originally offered on a limited basis at test centers established by Educational Testing Service (ETS), the SLEP test is now available to secondary schools in the United States and overseas through the SLEP School Service Program. This program enables schools to purchase the test, administer it to their own applicants and students, score the answer sheets, and interpret the scores.

Purpose and Use of the Test

A basic assumption underlying the SLEP test is that language ability is a critical factor in determining the degree to which secondary students can benefit from instruction; to succeed, they must be able to understand what is being said (by both teachers and fellow students) and to understand both formal and informal material written in English. The SLEP test is not an aptitude test or a measure of academic achievement; nor can it provide information about the various social and psychological factors that must be considered along with language ability in making admissions and placement decisions. However, the results of the test can be very helpful in evaluating ESL teaching programs and making placement decisions related to the following:

- assignment to ESL classes
- placement in a mainstream English-medium program
- exemption from a bilingual program
- evaluation of students' English proficiency upon completion of ESL programs

Because schools participating in the SLEP School Service Program can administer the test when they choose and have the results available immediately, the test can be used to help make these decisions at any time of the year.

The SLEP program encourages use of the test scores by an institution or organization if such use will assist it in making valid decisions, in terms of its own requirements, concerning English language proficiency. However, the institution or organization should determine whether the SLEP test is appropriate, with respect to both the language skills it measures and its level of difficulty, and must establish its own levels of acceptable performance in the test.

SLEP score users are invited to consult with the SLEP program staff about their current or intended uses of the test results.

Description and History

SLEP is a norm-referenced test containing 150 multiple-choice questions of eight different types. Because it is norm referenced, users can compare student results with those of other students in similar situations. Interpretive data provided in this manual permit comparisons between students having similar characteristics, such as age, grade, background, and exposure to English (see "Technical Data" on page 8).

The multiple-choice format was chosen primarily to ensure reliability of results through standardization of administrations and to eliminate reliance on the subjective judgments of raters.

The SLEP test was developed by staff at Educational Testing Service with the advice and assistance of a committee of examiners composed of secondary school ESL teachers with extensive experience teaching English to adolescent students. The first task in designing the test was to select the overall specifications and types of questions to be used. Of the many types considered, eight were chosen.

The test is divided into two sections, each containing four types of questions. For the first section, the four types of questions all use recorded samples of spoken English to test listening comprehension and do not rely heavily on written material. Two of them, descriptions of a picture and short conversations followed by questions based on a map, use no written material at all. Two other types of listening questions, multiple-choice dictation and questions based on conversations that take place in school, use short written options only. The four question types in the second or Reading Comprehension section, which also measures vocabulary and grammar, are based on written or visual materials. Section 2 includes written questions based on a cartoon, written questions based on line drawings, three multiple-choice cloze passages, and a literary passage followed by questions on its content.

The choice of material for the SLEP test was based on an analysis of actual materials designed for use in American classrooms (grades 7-11). In the case of some questions, particularly the conversations used in the Listening Comprehension section, every effort was made to use situations representative of those encountered by students in American secondary schools. Thus, some questions are based on conversations that take place in various parts of a school and deal with events that occur in each location. Conversations may also deal with extracurricular activities, academic subjects, school closings, and holidays. When appropriate, the voices of adolescents are used.

Test questions in both sections of the SLEP test are based on information presented in or easily inferred from the questions or from the associated passages or pictures.

Knowledge of specific subject matter is not tested, and there are no questions that bear on literary knowledge, literary analysis, or linguistic terminology.

A total of almost 1,500 questions were written and reviewed by ETS test development staff and the secondary school ESL specialists. Prior to final assembly of the test, the questions were extensively pretested. Various combinations of questions were administered to more than 6,000 secondary school students in the United States and a number of foreign countries. (Most of those tested abroad had studied English as a school subject for at least one year.) Only those questions meeting rigid requirements for levels of difficulty and discrimination power were accepted for use in final editions of the test. For additional information about the content validity and development of SLEP, see Stansfield (1984).

Experience with SLEP

SLEP Form 1 was administered twice in 1980 at test centers throughout the world. Data from these administrations provided initial information about the statistical characteristics of the test. To gather data specifically about limited-English speakers in the United States, the test was also administered to over 1,700 students at more than 60 public secondary schools in the United States during the 1980-81 school year. By combining test data with information about individual student characteristics, norms were established for separate categories of students. Thus, it is possible to use the test results to determine how the performance of individual students on each section of the test compares with that of students with similar characteristics. Information about interpreting SLEP results is given on pages 16-27 of this manual.

Alternate Forms

Currently, there are three equivalent versions of the SLEP test available for use when it is advisable to use a different edition of the test for testing the same group of students more than once.

In January 1981, SLEP Form 2 was administered to international students at test centers throughout the world. In October and November 1987, Form 3 was administered to a similar group of students. Examinee performance data on a subset of 40 items (20 items for each section) that appear on all three forms were used to statistically equate Form 1 to Forms 2 and 3. This procedure, which is known as linear common item equating, converts raw scores to a common scale. By taking into account group differences and inevitable differences in difficulty from form to form, the equating procedure ensures that scores obtained on alternate forms of the test represent comparable levels of language proficiency. The availability of alternate forms makes SLEP particularly suitable for use as both a placement test and an exit test, as well as for program evaluation purposes.

Technical Data

The special data-collection project described earlier and the resulting norms provide basic support for the validity of the SLEP test. Analyses from these administrations have yielded separate norms for students who have been enrolled in ESL, bilingual, or mainstream classes. Other analyses from this project have confirmed that the test discriminates among students based on the length of time they have studied English. Those who have had longer periods of English instruction regularly score higher on both sections of the test.

The reliability of SLEP has been determined using the Kuder-Richardson formula (20). Reliability coefficients have been computed as .94 for the first section, .93 for the second, and .96 for the total test.

General Instructions

Administering SLEP

The SLEP test can be administered in its entirety or in two separate sessions, to individuals or to groups. The time required for the entire test is approximately 85 minutes (just under 40 minutes for Section 1 and 45 minutes for Section 2). This includes time for students to do the practice questions that are provided for every question type. For both sections of the test the students use a test book and mark their answers on a separate answer sheet.

The answer sheets available for the SLEP School Service Program are printed in three-ply sets. The first ply provides the four-choice answer response ovals to be used by the examinees to mark their answer choices. The second and third plies contain only the correct responses. The three copies allow for multiple records of an examinee's performance; for example, one copy of the answer sheet may be kept by the teacher, one in the student's file, and one by the guidance counselor or international student adviser.

After administering the test, the teacher removes the first ply of the answer sheet set. The answers gridded by an examinee on the first ply automatically register on the second and third plies. Thus, the teacher can simply count the number of marks that coincide with the preprinted correct response pattern to determine the examinee's raw score.

Detailed instructions for administering the SLEP test are on pages 10-15.

Ordering Information

Each order for SLEP testing materials must be submitted on a SLEP order form and sent to the address on the form. It must be received at ETS at least three weeks before the requested delivery date.

To ensure prompt and accurate filling and delivery of orders, all information requested on the order form must be provided. An incomplete or unsigned order form will not be processed and will be returned to the sender.

Materials Provided by the SLEP School Service Program. Under this program, the SLEP test is scored by the administering institution, which retains the test materials; ETS does not offer a scoring service. A separate basic test material package is available for Form 1, Form 2, and Form 3. Each package contains 20 test books, 100 three-ply answer sheets, 1 SLEP **Test Manual** with instructions for administering the test and interpreting the results, and 1 cassette recording of the listening comprehension questions (institutions must provide their own recorders). The price of this package is $110, payable at the time of the order or billed against a purchase order.

Each of the items in the basic package can also be ordered separately. (An order form and price list are included with the test materials; additional copies may be obtained from the SLEP office.)

Fees, Return Policy. The prices on the order form are current as of January 1991and are subject to change without notice. An official purchase order, or a check in the amount of the total order, must accompany the order form. (Note that there is a $5 handling charge for orders of less than $110 originating in North America. Orders from outside North America incur a 20 percent shipping and handling surcharge. Shipping charges do not apply to institutions using APO or FPO addresses.) Payment must be made in US dollars by a bank check drawn on a bank in the United States, or an international money order, made payable to Educational Testing Service-SLEP Program. If a purchase order is sent, the purchase order number must be entered on the order form.

Shipping charges for orders received within three weeks of the requested delivery date will be paid by ETS. Extraordinary shipping charges necessary to meet requested delivery dates for orders received later will be billed to the institution.

There will be no refund of fees paid for SLEP materials that are returned to ETS. However, if an item is found to be defective upon receipt, it should be returned with an accompanying letter describing the defect. The defective item will be replaced free of charge.

Important Note: The SLEP test is designed primarily for use by accredited secondary educational institutions. Under certain circumstances, however, the SLEP office will approve purchase and use of the testing materials by postsecondary institutions, training agencies, educational consultants, and others engaged in legitimate testing activities. ETS reserves the right to accept or reject orders for SLEP testing materials in whole or in part.

Educational Testing Service adheres to the American Psychological Association (APA) Ethical Code. The APA, in its publication **Standards for Educational Psychological Testing,** describes the serious responsibilities of test users in applying standards in test situations. "Although the test developers and publishers should provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of the test, the ultimate responsibility for test use lies with the test users."

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Administering the Test

General Information

Please read this section carefully before the actual test administration. It explains the planning and arrangements needed for an administration of the SLEP test and provides the directions that are to be read aloud to the students. It is, therefore, essential that the person administering SLEP, and any assistants, become familiar with the uniform procedures, information, and instructions given in this manual.

Test Security. It is important that the students to be tested do not have an opportunity to examine a test book before they take SLEP. Only authorized personnel should have access to the testing materials, which should be kept in locked storage when not in use. Each part of the SLEP test contains sample questions, and information and sample questions provided in the blue SLEP brochure may also be used to acquaint students with the format of the test.

Receipt of Test Materials. Within 24 hours of its receipt the test shipment should be verified by checking the contents of each carton against the shipment notice (sent under separate cover). The SLEP program office must be notified immediately if any items are missing. After all items in the shipment are checked, the testing materials should be placed in a secure storage area.

Assistants to the Person Administering the Test. The number of assistants needed will depend on the number of students to be tested. There should always be at least one assistant so that if an emergency arises the testing room will not be left unattended.

Assistants should help the person administering the test before, during, and after the test by:

- checking to see that students have written their names and other identification information correctly on their answer sheets;
- walking about the room frequently during the test to guard against cheating and to ensure that every student is working on the appropriate section;
- checking to see that the students are marking their answers in the appropriate section of their answer sheets.

Assistants should pay attention to their duties at all times and should not disturb the examinees by pausing too long behind individual students or by talking during the test.

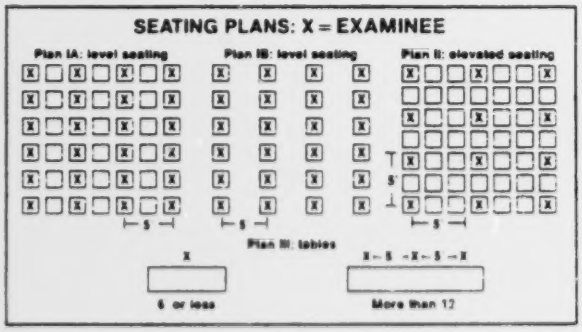
Testing Room. Test performance can be affected by the psychological atmosphere of the testing room. To contribute to an atmosphere conducive to maximum performance, the room(s) used for testing should be comfortable and free from distractions; the lighting, heat, and ventilation should be satisfactory. Rooms with acoustical problems should not be used for Section 1, Listening Comprehension.

Writing surfaces are important. They should be large enough to accommodate both a test book and an answer sheet; no one should have to pick up or shift either one because of lack of space. If lapboards must be used, they should be large enough so students will not have to support them by hand.

Seating. In devising a seating plan for the administration of the SLEP test, the following guidelines should be considered:

- All examinees should face the same direction, and they should be seated so they cannot exchange information or see their neighbors' responses; all chairs in a row must be directly behind those in the preceding row. There should be at least five feet (one and a half meters) between any two students.
- The person administering the test and any assistants must have unimpeded access to each person being tested.
- Left-handed students should be seated in a separate row or in the last seat of each row of right-handed students. If chairs with left-hand tablet arms are not available, each left-handed student should be seated with a vacant chair to his or her left.
- On the day of the test, the students should be directed to seats at random (alternating from side to side or from front to back of the room) to avoid any possibility of friends carrying out a prearranged cheating scheme. Students should not be allowed to select their own seats.

Sample seating plans are shown below.



Equipment Needed for the Test Administration. The materials needed to administer the SLEP test include those purchased from Educational Testing Service and those supplied by the institution administering the test. The following checklists should be used to ensure that everything needed is available.

Checklist--Materials Purchased from ETS

- ☐ **SLEP Test Manual**, with instructions for administering the test, scoring the answer sheets, and computing scores
- ☐ Test books
- ☐ Answer sheets
- ☐ A tape (cassette) for the Listening Comprehension section
- ☐ Scoring keys for scoring the answer sheets (only if single-ply answer sheets are ordered)

Checklist--Materials Supplied by Administering Institution

- ☐ A reliable watch for timing Section 2
- ☐ A clock (alarm clock-size or larger) in the event a testing room does not have one. There should always be at least two timepieces in each testing room as a check against mistiming.
- ☐ Playback equipment for the Listening Comprehension section--a standard-size cassette player that reproduces sound with minimum distortion
- ☐ Loudspeakers to improve audibility, if necessary (i.e., if more than 15 are tested)
- ☐ Several black, soft-lead pencils, erasers, and a pencil sharpener

Equipment Preparation. Because a script for the Listening Comprehension section is NOT provided with the test materials, it is essential that the playback equipment to be used be in working order. To eliminate distortion, the recording/playback heads should be cleaned with a recommended solvent; the pickup tracks on the heads of the player must be aligned with the recorded tracks on the tape (distortion is often the result of misalignment).

If the playback equipment works well but the actual test recording is not satisfactory the first time it is used, print "defective" on the label and return the cassette to ETS with a letter describing the defect. (Depending on when the defect is discovered, you may have to postpone the administration.)

It is usually helpful to use an external loudspeaker--that is, a separate speaker not built into the cassette player. An external loudspeaker should always be used if more than 15 students are to be tested. Most cassette players are equipped with an earphone jack. To connect the external speaker, plug the speaker wire into the earphone jack on the cassette player. External speakers of radio and other stereo equipment can usually be used for this purpose.

Specific Instructions for Administering the SLEP Test

Read aloud to the students all directions printed in boxes, pausing where four dots appear to allow time for the procedure described to be carried out. You should read the directions slowly, and you may repeat them if necessary. Do not depart from these directions or answer any questions about the content of the test, and do not translate from English any instructions for the students. Scores of students tested will be comparable only if SLEP is administered under standardized conditions. It is, therefore, essential that the instructions and timing be strictly adhered to.

When everyone has been admitted and seated, say:

> **During the test you may have nothing on your desk EXCEPT your test book, answer sheet, and pencils. Try to answer every question in the test, but do not be concerned if you cannot answer all of them. If you are not sure of the correct answer to a question, make the best guess you can and go on to the next question.**

If the complete test is being given in one session, say:

> **There will be no rest break during the test.**

If the test is being given in two sessions, say:

> **There are two sections in this test. The Listening Comprehension section will be given now; the Reading Comprehension section will be given _____** (give instructions according to your plan).

Then say:

> **I am now going to give you the answer sheets. These answer sheets are three-ply sets. DO NOT separate the sheets; mark your answers on the top sheet.**

Distribute one answer sheet set to each student. When you have finished and everyone is ready, say:

> **Does everyone have a pencil?....** (Give a pencil to anyone who does not have one.) **Use only your pencil when you write on your answer sheet. Be sure all your marks are heavy and that you fill in completely all the necessary ovals. If you make a mistake, make an X through the oval or mark you wish to change and then fill in the new answer oval completely. Now, look at the box at the top of your answer sheet and write your name on the line provided....**
>
> **On the two lines under your name, write your age and your present class or grade level.... Next, on the line labeled "Native (First) Language," write the name of your native language.... On the next line, write today's date** (give the date)....
>
> **Now I am going to give you the test books. When you get your test book, read the directions on the back cover. Do NOT open your test book until I tell you to do so, and do not write on it.**

Give one test book to each student individually. When you have finished, say:

> **After you have read the directions, look up at me....**

When everyone is ready, say:

> **Look at the letters and numbers after the word "Form" in the upper right corner of your test book. Now, copy these letters and numbers onto your answer sheet, on the line labeled "Test Book Form Number."** (Show the group where to find the form designation on the test book and where to write it on the answer sheet.) **Does everyone understand what to do?....**

After everyone has finished writing the form number, say:

Remember that you should have nothing on your desk but your test book, answer sheet, pencil, and erasers. You may not make notes in your test book or on your answer sheet, and you may not use note paper. Be sure you mark your answers only in the proper places on your answer sheet. If you find something wrong with your test book during the test, or if you need another pencil, raise your hand.

Each of the two sections in this test has a different time limit. During the time allowed for a section, you must work only on that section. Even if you finish before time is called, you must stay in your seat until everyone is dismissed.

You may not ask any questions once the test begins. Please raise your hand now if you have any questions or do not understand....

Answer any questions students may have about procedures; then say:

The first section of the test is Listening Comprehension. All the directions for this section are given on the recording you will hear in a moment. At the beginning of the recording, each of the speakers will make an introductory statement. If you cannot hear these statements clearly, raise your hand immediately so I can make adjustments. Once the test begins, I cannot make any changes.

Find the answer spaces for Section 1 on your answer sheet. Now open your test book to the directions for Section 1 and read along as they are read on the tape.

Caution to Test Administrators: One set of questions in the listening comprehension section refers to a map. The questions and the response choices are not printed in the test book. The students must study the map as they listen to the recording. Make sure your students do not turn the page of the test book looking for answer choices.

BEGIN THE TEST.

Start the recording. Make any necessary adjustments or seating changes after the completion of the introductory statements (which may be replayed if necessary). It is very important that you make any necessary adjustments at this time so all students can hear the recording clearly.

You (and/or your assistants) should walk about the room as soon as the students begin working to be sure everyone is working on the correct section and is marking the answers in the appropriate area, and in the appropriate order, on the answer sheet.

At the conclusion of Section 1, you will hear the speaker say "end of recording." Turn off the machine.

If you are giving the test in two sessions, go to the directions on the next page.

If you are giving the complete test in one session, Section 2 should be started as soon as the recording for Section 1 is completed. Immediately after you turn off the machine, say:

Stop work on Section 1. During the next 45 minutes you may work only on Section 2. Do NOT work on Section 1. Turn to the directions for Section 2 in your test book, read them, and begin work.

After exactly 45 minutes, say:

Stop work. Close your test book and keep it closed. Do not put your answer sheet inside your test book.

Now look over your answer sheet carefully. Be sure all the marks you made are dark and completely fill the ovals.

I am going to collect the test books first and then the answer sheets. No one may leave the room until all materials have been collected and counted, and you may not talk until you are dismissed.

Collect the test books and then the answer sheets; be sure you have the correct number of each. As you collect the answer sheets, check to be certain that each examinee has completed the identification information at the top. When you can account for all materials, dismiss the students.

IF YOU ARE GIVING THE TEST IN TWO SESSIONS:

Immediately after you turn off the machine, say:

> **Stop work on Section 1. Close your test book and keep it closed. Do not put your answer sheet inside your test book.**
>
> **Now look over your answer sheet carefully. Be sure all the marks you made are dark and completely fill the ovals.**
>
> **I am going to collect the test books first and then the answer sheets. No one may leave the room until all materials have been collected, and you may not talk until you are dismissed.**

Collect the test books and then the answer sheets. As you collect the answer sheets, check to be certain that each examinee has completed the identification information at the top of the answer sheet. When you are sure you have the correct number of test books and answer sheets, say:

> **Section 2 of the test, Reading Comprehension, will be given _____** (give instructions according to your plan). **You may leave now.**

SECTION 2, READING COMPREHENSION

Note: If students are to use separate answer sheets for Section 2, give them the new answer sheets after they have been admitted and seated, and have them complete the identification information at the top of the answer sheet. Skip the next instruction and read the subsequent instructions aloud.

If the students are to use the same answer sheets they used for Section 1, after everyone has been admitted and seated, say:

> **I am now going to give you your answer sheets. When you get your answer sheet, check to make certain it is the same one you used for Section 1.**

When you are certain that everyone has provided the identification information at the top of his or her answer sheet, say:

> **When you get your test book, read only the directions on the back cover. DO NOT open the test book, and do not write on it.**

Hand one test book to each student individually. When you have finished, say:

> **After you have read the directions, look up at me....**

When everyone is ready, say:

> **Does everyone have a pencil?** (Give a pencil to anyone who does not have one.) **Be sure to use only your pencil to mark your answers to the questions, and make your marks heavy enough so that you fill in the oval spaces completely.**
>
> **Now remove from your desk everything but your test book, answer sheet, and pencils. You may not make notes in your test book, on your answer sheet, or on note paper. Remember to mark your answers only in the proper places on your answer sheet. If you find something wrong with your test book during the test, or if you need another pencil, raise your hand.**
>
> **You must work ONLY on Section 2. Do not look at Section 1 during this part of the test. Try to answer every question, but do not be concerned if you cannot answer all of them. If you are not sure of the correct answer to a question, make the best guess you can and go on to the next question. If you finish Section 2 before time is called, you must stay in your seat until everyone is dismissed. You may not ask any questions once the test has begun.**
>
> **Please raise your hand now if you have any questions or do not understand. Do not open the test book yet....**

Answer any questions students may have about procedures; then say:

You will have 45 minutes to work on Section 2. Find the answer spaces for Section 2 on your answer sheet, open your test book to Section 2, and begin work.

You (and/or your assistants) should walk about the room as soon as the students begin working to be sure everyone is working on the correct section and is marking the answers in the appropriate area, and in the appropriate order, on the answer sheet.

After **exactly** 45 minutes, say:

Stop work. Close your test book and keep it closed. Do not put your answer sheet inside your test book.

Now look over your answer sheet carefully. Be sure all the marks you made are dark and completely fill the ovals.

I am going to collect the test books first and then the answer sheets. No one may leave the room until all materials have been collected and counted, and you may not talk until you are dismissed.

Collect the test books and then the answer sheets. As you collect the answer sheets, check to be certain that each examinee has completed the identification information at the top of the answer sheet. When you are sure you have the correct number of test books and answer sheets, dismiss the students.

Scoring the Answer Sheets

Scores of all the students tested will be comparable only if the SLEP test is given under the same conditions as those followed in administrations of the test from which statistical data were gathered.

The answer sheets for the SLEP test are designed for hand scoring; they cannot be scored by machine. Remove the top ply of the answer sheet set and count the number of marks that coincide with the preprinted correct response pattern to determine the examinee's raw score.

If you are using the original single-ply answer sheets, place the scoring stencil over the answer sheet so the correct response area to each question appears as a clear spot in a field of blue or is visible through the stencil. The fields of blue correspond to the response areas on the answer sheet for Section 1 and Section 2. The open space to the right of each question number on the scoring stencil permits the scorer to mark each incorrect answer on the student's answer sheet.

Before scoring the answer sheets, scan each one for improper markings. Wherever a student has clearly indicated more than one answer to a question, draw a horizontal line through all answer spaces for that question with a colored pencil. If a student has partially erased one choice and it is clear that another choice is the intended answer, erase the extra mark so it will not be scored.

To score an answer sheet, place the answer stencil over it so correct response fields are correctly aligned with the response areas. Misalignment of the answer stencil will result in incorrect scores. Ignoring the marks with horizontal lines drawn through them, count the number of answer marks showing through the clear spots. This is the number of correct answers the student has chosen, and it is the student's raw score. Any clear spot showing only the letter in the oval or a line drawn through the oval is to be counted as a wrong or omitted response. To check the raw score, be sure the number of correct responses and the number of omitted and incorrect responses equal the number of questions in the section.

For each section, write the number of wrong and omitted responses and the number of correct responses in the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the answer sheet. Then, using the conversion table for either Form 1, Form 2, or Form 3 (pages 17-19), convert the raw score for each section to the scaled score for that form. Write the scaled score for each section in the appropriate box for the section and in the box for scaled scores. The scaled scores for Section 1 and Section 2 should then be added to obtain the scaled score for the total test. The use of scaled scores allows direct comparisons to be made among scores on all three forms of the test, and thus, in effect, cancels out any differences in difficulty that may exist from form to form.

Interpreting SLEP Scores

Deriving Scaled Scores. Scores for the SLEP test consist of a score for each section and a score for the total test. Before the scores can be interpreted, the raw scores (number of correct responses) for each section of the test must be converted to scaled scores. Scaled scores are neither the number nor the percentage of questions answered correctly. The scaled score for each section indicates how well the student did on that section of the test on a scale ranging from a low of 10 to a maximum of 40. The total score (the sum of the scaled scores for both sections) is on a scale that ranges from 20 to 80.

It should be noted that although 10 to 40 (part score) and 20 to 80 (total score) scales are used, the actual ranges of possible scaled scores do not extend across the entire scale. For all three forms of SLEP the minimum and maximum scaled scores are the following:

	Lowest Scaled Score	Highest Scaled Score
Section 1	10	32
Section 2	10	35
Total	20	67

Thus, while it is possible for a student to achieve a scaled score of only 10 for each section of the test, with a minimum total scaled score of only 20, the maximum possible scaled scores for Sections 1 and 2 are 32 and 35, respectively. The maximum possible total scaled score is 67.

The score conversion tables on pages 17, 18 and 19 may be used to convert raw scores on different forms to the SLEP scale described above. The conversion tables were derived by a statistical procedure known as equating, which takes into account the performance of different sets of examinees on 40 common items that appear on all forms of the test. For example, an examinee who receives a raw score of 52 (52 correct answers) on the Listening Comprehension section of Form 1 would receive a scaled score of 21 for this section. The same raw score on Form 2 of SLEP equals a scaled score of 23 for this section; on Form 3 it results in a scaled score of 21 for the section. Using the scaled scores obtained by referring to the score conversion tables ensures that the scaled scores obtained on alternate forms of the test represent comparable levels of language proficiency. Thus, no examinee is advantaged or disadvantaged by the form of the test that is taken.

Deriving Percentile Ranks. Comparing a student's scores to the known minimum and maximum possible scores provides limited information; more accurate comparisons can be made by referring to percentile ranks. The percentile ranks for SLEP scores shown on page 20 can be used to compare one student's performance with that of other students who have taken the test.

By using this table, it can be determined, for example, that if a student obtains a scaled score of 27 for Section 1, 71 percent of the students tested had lower scores. If the scaled score obtained by the student is 28 for Section 2, 83 percent of the scores were lower, and if the total score is 55, 81 percent of the scores for those same students were lower. (Note that if the total scaled score were 54, which falls between 53 and 55, between 75 and 81 percent of those tested would have lower scores.)

The scores for the SLEP test cannot be perfectly precise ability indicators. An individual's scores can vary just by chance from one testing to another, even when there is no change in the student's true ability. The index that is commonly used to describe the degree of precision in a measurement is called the standard error of measurement. The standard error of measurement for the SLEP total score is two scaled score points. About two-thirds of the obtained scores can be expected to fall between one standard error below the true score and one standard error above the true score. This means that if a student's "true" ability score (the score the student would earn if the test could measure his or her ability with perfect precision) is, for example, 55, the chances are two out of three that the student's obtained score will be between 53 and 57 (55 plus or minus 2).

Naturally, variation in scaled scores due to less than precise measurement can also affect an examinee's rank within a distribution. The greatest variation in rank usually occurs with scaled scores near the mean. Thus, a two-point change in a scaled score near the mean may move an examinee as much as 11 percent within the distribution, while the same two-point change in a scaled score at either end of the distribution moves the examinee only a few percentile ranks. The degree of change in rank within a distribution depends on the spread of scores within the distribution. Thus, local norms should be developed whenever possible.

While percentile ranks provide some additional information that can aid in the interpretation of an examinee's score, more relevant comparisons are made with the scores of other examinees having similar characteristics. Such data can be found in the section that follows.

There are no passing or failing scores, as such, for the SLEP test. Each school should make its own decisions regarding the use of SLEP scores to help in placing students or in deciding the courses of study in which students should enroll.

SECONDARY LEVEL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST
SCORE CONVERSION TABLE
Form 1

Listening Comprehension				Reading Comprehension			
Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score
75	32	35	13	75	35	35	19
74	31	34	13	74	35	34	18
73	31	33	13	73	35	33	18
72	30	32	12	72	34	32	17
71	30	31	12	71	34	31	17
70	29	30	11	70	33	30	17
69	29	29	11	69	33	29	16
68	28	28	10	68	33	28	16
67	28	27	10	67	32	27	15
66	28	26	10	66	32	26	15
65	27	25	10	65	31	25	14
64	27	24	10	64	31	24	14
63	26	23	10	63	30	23	14
62	26	22	10	62	30	22	13
61	25	21	10	61	30	21	13
60	25	20	10	60	29	20	12
59	24	19	10	59	29	19	12
58	24	18	10	58	28	18	11
57	23	17	10	57	28	17	11
56	23	16	10	56	27	16	11
55	23	15	10	55	27	15	10
54	22	14	10	54	27	14	10
53	22	13	10	53	26	13	10
52	21	12	10	52	26	12	10
51	21	11	10	51	25	11	10
50	20	10	10	50	25	10	10
49	20	9	10	49	25	9	10
48	19	8	10	48	24	8	10
47	19	7	10	47	24	7	10
46	18	6	10	46	23	6	10
45	18	5	10	45	23	5	10
44	18	4	10	44	22	4	10
43	17	3	10	43	22	3	10
42	17	2	10	42	22	2	10
41	16	1	10	41	21	1	10
40	16	0	10	40	21	0	10
39	15			39	20		
38	15			38	20		
37	14			37	19		
36	14			36	19		

SECONDARY LEVEL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST
SCORE CONVERSION TABLE
Form 2

Listening Comprehension				Reading Comprehension			
Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score
75	32	37	17	75	35	37	18
74	32	36	17	74	35	36	18
73	32	35	16	73	35	35	17
72	31	34	16	72	34	34	17
71	31	33	16	71	34	33	17
70	30	32	15	70	33	32	16
69	30	31	15	69	33	31	16
68	30	30	14	68	32	30	15
67	29	29	14	67	32	29	15
66	29	28	14	66	31	28	14
65	28	27	13	65	31	27	14
64	28	26	13	64	30	26	13
63	28	25	13	63	30	25	13
62	27	24	12	62	30	24	13
61	27	23	12	61	29	23	12
60	26	22	11	60	29	22	12
59	26	21	11	59	28	21	11
58	26	20	11	58	28	20	11
57	25	19	10	57	27	19	10
56	25	18	10	56	27	18	10
55	24	17	10	55	26	17	10
54	24	16	10	54	26	16	10
53	24	15	10	53	26	15	10
52	23	14	10	52	25	14	10
51	23	13	10	51	25	13	10
50	22	12	10	50	24	12	10
49	22	11	10	49	24	11	10
48	22	10	10	48	23	10	10
47	21	9	10	47	23	9	10
46	21	8	10	46	22	8	10
45	20	7	10	45	22	7	10
44	20	6	10	44	22	6	10
43	20	5	10	43	21	5	10
42	19	4	10	42	21	4	10
41	19	3	10	41	20	3	10
40	18	2	10	40	20	2	10
39	18	1	10	39	19	1	10
38	18	0	10	38	19	0	10

SECONDARY LEVEL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST
SCORE CONVERSION TABLE
Form 3

Listening Comprehension				Reading Comprehension			
Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Scaled Score
75	32	35	13	75	34	35	18
74	32	34	13	74	34	34	18
73	31	33	12	73	34	33	17
72	31	32	12	72	33	32	17
71	30	31	11	71	33	31	17
70	30	30	11	70	32	30	16
69	29	29	10	69	32	29	16
68	29	28	10	68	32	28	15
67	28	27	10	67	31	27	15
66	28	26	10	66	31	26	15
65	27	25	10	65	30	25	14
64	27	24	10	64	30	24	14
63	26	23	10	63	30	23	13
62	26	22	10	62	29	22	13
61	26	21	10	61	29	21	13
60	25	20	10	60	28	20	12
59	25	19	10	59	28	19	12
58	24	18	10	58	27	18	11
57	24	17	10	57	27	17	11
56	23	16	10	56	27	16	11
55	23	15	10	55	26	15	10
54	22	14	10	54	26	14	10
53	22	13	10	53	25	13	10
52	21	12	10	52	25	12	10
51	21	11	10	51	25	11	10
50	20	10	10	50	24	10	10
49	20	9	10	49	24	9	10
48	19	8	10	48	23	8	10
47	19	7	10	47	23	7	10
46	18	6	10	46	23	6	10
45	18	5	10	45	22	5	10
44	17	4	10	44	22	4	10
43	17	3	10	43	21	3	10
42	16	2	10	42	21	2	10
41	16	1	10	41	21	1	10
40	16	0	10	40	20	0	10
39	15			39	20		
38	15			38	19		
37	14			37	19		
36	14			36	19		

PERCENTILE RANKS FOR SLEP SCORES

(Based on the Performance of 1,226 Nonnative Students Tested with Form 1 in Public Schools During 1980-81)

Section 1		Section 2		Total Test	
Scaled Score	% with Lower Score	Scaled Score	% with Lower Score	Scaled Score	% with Lower Score
32	99.5	35	99.8	67	99.9
31	97	34	99	65	99.2
30	91	33	97	63	97
29	85	32	95	61	93
28	77	31	92	59	90
27	71	30	90	57	85
26	67	29	87	55	81
25	62	28	83	53	75
24	58	27	78	51	71
23	51	26	75	49	66
22	47	25	69	47	60
21	42	24	66	45	55
20	38	23	61	43	49
19	35	22	54	41	44
18	29	21	48	39	39
17	26	20	43	37	33
16	23	19	35	35	28
15	20	18	29	33	24
14	19	17	21	31	19
13	15	16	17	29	16
12	12	15	13	27	11
11	10	14	8	25	7
		13	5	23	3
		12	2	21	0
		11	1		

Note: Because raw scores on the two forms are equated, equal scaled scores on different forms are comparable in terms of language proficiency and rank within the distribution.

Statistical Information

Psychometric Characteristics

The first part of this section (Tables 1-3) presents the statistical characteristics of the test and the second part (Tables 4-11) provides summary statistics that describe the test performance of different subgroups of students who have taken the test.

The data shown in Tables 1-3 are based on scores from two international administrations of Form 1 in January and May 1980; the data in Tables 4-11 are based on statistical information that has been derived from analyses of the test performance of different groups of students who have taken the test. Some of the figures indicated were derived from a compilation of scores from the two international administrations of Form 1 in January and May 1980. The remaining data were derived from a compilation of scores from special administrations of the same form of the test at more than 50 public secondary schools in the United States.

The data from the international administrations reported in Tables 1, 2, and 3 are based on the performance of 326 students who took the SLEP test at more than 30 test centers worldwide. Table 1 gives mean scores for this group as well as standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and the standard errors of measurement for scores for both sections of the test and the total score.

The product-moment correlation between Section 1 and Section 2 is .782, well below the reliabilities of these two sections. The between-section correlation coefficient corrected for attenuation is .837. These values indicate that the section scores do carry some nonredundant information about an examinee, and reporting separate scores for sections appears to be warranted.

Tables 2 and 3 give the correlation coefficients for separate parts within each section and for each part across sections based on results from the international sample. The correlations corrected for attenuation are shown in parentheses.

The correlations among parts within a section tend to be slightly higher than the correlations of parts across sections. The disattenuated correlations among the four parts of Section 1 range from .641 to .867 and have an average value of around .78. The corrected coefficients among the four parts of Section 2 range from .509 to .966 and have an average value of around .75. The 16 corrected correlations among the four parts of Section 1 and the four parts of Section 2 range from .475 to .917 and have an average value of about .69.

The disattenuated correlations among parts within sections, apart from those for Dictation and Cartoon, tend to range between .75 and .95. Dictation, which is part 2 of Section 1, however, has relatively low correlations with parts 3 and 4 in that section, and also with all the parts of Section 2. Part 5, Cartoon, has low correlations with parts 7 and 8 of Section 2 and with all parts of Section 1.

Norms: Relating Student Characteristics to Performance on SLEP

In an effort to provide norms for the SLEP test based on the performance of students representing groups similar to those who will be taking SLEP as part of the School Service Program, Form 1 was administered to 1,744 nonnative English-speaking students enrolled at public secondary schools throughout the United States during the 1980-81 school year. In addition to taking the test, the students were asked to complete a background information questionnaire. Tables 4-9 indicate means and standard deviations for the 1,239 students who returned the questionnaire, broken down into various categories.

Table 4 depicts student responses to the question, "In which type of program are you currently enrolled?" Student responses indicate consistent improvement in SLEP scaled scores according to the degree of remedial instruction reported. Students receiving part-time remedial instruction (in either an ESL or bilingual education program) performed better than those receiving full-time remedial instruction, and nonnative English-speaking students who had already been mainstreamed performed considerably better than those who were receiving partial remedial assistance in special programs.

It should be remembered that the data presented here do not represent a single program, but rather a total of 68 programs. No attempt was made to ensure the comparability of program type across institutions. It is highly probable that program types varied considerably from school to school. Indeed, this is partially reflected in the standard deviations, which are larger within program type than might be expected if program types were identical across institutions.

It is noteworthy that the average total score of mainstreamed students, that is, students not receiving remedial assistance and whose native language is other than English, was 50.4. Such information may be useful to those wishing to interpret examinee performance on SLEP in terms of the English proficiency required to function in an English-medium instructional environment. It must be remembered that the actual English proficiency level necessary for adequate performance may vary according to the school in which the student is enrolled and the subject being pursued.

Tables 5-11 provide additional data that may be useful in comparing the performance or progress of a student with that of other students with similar characteristics. Analyses of these data, as well as information on the history and development of

SLEP, can be found in "Reliability and Validity of the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test" (Stansfield, 1984).

Similar data are provided in Tables 10 and 11 for test performance by sex and by grade level for all 1,744 public school students tested in the study described on page 21.

The data in Table 12 depict the performance on different sections of SLEP (Form 1) of 484 native speakers of English enrolled in the Beaverton, Oregon, public schools. Each student took only one section of the test as indicated. As would be expected, the results indicate that the SLEP test does not discriminate well among native speakers of English. SLEP is appropriate only with students for whom English is a second language.

These data may be compared with the data on mainstreamed nonnative English speakers in Table 4. It is apparent that most nonnative English-speaking students do not obtain the same level of language proficiency as native English speakers, even though the nonnative speakers may be able to function adequately in an English-medium instructional environment. It is important for the test user to remember this when making decisions regarding the placement of examinees. It may also be important for the classroom teacher to remember this when judging the performance of nonnative English speakers on certain tasks that rely heavily on language skills, such as participating in a class discussion, writing an essay, or completing a reading assignment in a limited amount of time.

TABLE 1
Summary Data

	Mean Scaled Score	Standard Deviation	Reliability	Standard Error of Measurement
Section 1	24.94	5.17	.939	1.31
Section 2	25.00	5.23	.930	1.40
Total	49.94	9.82	.962	1.95

TABLE 2
Correlations Among Parts Across Sections

Section 1 Part		Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Sect. 2	5	.468 (.603)	.490 (.603)	.453 (.619)	.476 (.603)
	6	.676 (.893)	.594 (.749)	.555 (.777)	.707 (.917)
	7	.626 (.736)	.592 (.665)	.525 (.665)	.696 (.805)
	8	.491 (.659)	.371 (.475)	.404 (.575)	.570 (.751)

TABLE 3
Correlations Among Parts Within a Section

Section 1 Part		Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
	1 One Picture			
	2 Dictation	.665 (.783)		
	3 Map	.635 (.830)	.552 (.689)	
	4 Conversation	.716 (.867)	.554 (.641)	.657 (.844)

Section 2 Part		Part 5	Part 6	Part 7
	5 Cartoon			
	6 Four Pictures	.564 (.779)		
	7 Cloze	.527 (.648)	.767 (.966)	
	8 Passage	.363 (.509)	.556 (.799)	.621 (.795)

TABLE 4
SLEP Performance by Type of Program

Program Type	N	Listening Comp. Mean	Listening Comp. S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	Reading Comp. S.D.	Total Score Mean	Total Score S.D.
No Response	19	19.8	7.6	20.1	6.4	39.9	12.6
ESL, Full Time	159	18.5	5.8	18.9	4.5	37.5	9.6
ESL, Part Time	694	21.5	6.2	21.4	5.4	42.9	11.0
Bilingual, Full Time	71	15.1	5.2	16.5	4.1	31.6	8.6
Bilingual, Part Time	85	17.9	6.3	19.0	5.4	36.9	11.2
Mainstream Class	211	25.3	6.1	25.1	6.5	50.4	12.1

TABLE 5
SLEP Performance by Student Status

Group	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	64	18.3	6.1	19.3	4.2	37.6	9.4
Foreign Student	338	22.3	6.1	22.4	5.7	44.7	11.3
Immigrant	356	21.8	6.2	21.3	5.5	43.1	11.1
Refugee	176	16.4	5.4	17.8	4.4	34.2	9.1
U.S. Citizen	296	22.4	7.1	21.2	6.8	44.5	13.3
Nondocumented	9	23.7	3.9	23.4	4.1	47.1	7.6

TABLE 6
SLEP Performance by Length of Time at School

Group	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	13	14.6	5.9	16.9	4.4	31.5	9.0
Less than 6 months	482	18.9	6.7	19.6	5.6	38.5	11.7
6 months to 1 year	244	22.2	6.0	22.0	5.6	44.2	11.1
More than 1 year	500	23.0	6.1	22.5	5.9	45.5	11.4

TABLE 7
SLEP Performance by Length of Time in U.S.

Group	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	9	16.0	7.2	17.4	7.4	33.4	13.7
Less than 6 Months	215	18.1	6.9	19.4	6.0	37.5	12.3
6 Months to 1 year	240	19.0	6.6	19.7	5.7	38.6	11.8
More than 1 Year but less than 2 years	335	20.9	5.8	21.0	5.2	41.9	10.4
More than 2 years but less than 5 years	202	23.1	5.8	22.1	5.2	45.2	10.3
More than 5 years but less than lifetime	94	22.8	6.2	22.0	6.4	44.9	12.0
Lifetime	144	26.3	5.0	25.6	5.5	51.9	9.7

TABLE 8
SLEP Performance by Length of English Study in U.S.

Group	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	16	19.3	7.0	19.7	5.6	38.9	11.5
Less than 6 Months	476	18.5	6.7	19.5	5.8	38.0	11.9
More than 1 Year but less than 2 years	342	21.1	5.8	21.0	5.3	42.1	10.4
More than 2 years	405	24.4	5.8	23.5	5.8	47.8	11.0

TABLE 9
SLEP Performance by Length of English Study Outside U.S.

Response	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	237	21.7	6.9	21.5	6.2	43.2	12.4
Less than 1 Year	487	20.2	6.6	20.4	5.7	40.6	11.8
More than 1 Year but less than 2 years	130	21.0	6.3	21.2	5.0	42.3	10.9
More than 2 years	385	22.1	6.4	22.0	6.1	44.1	11.9

TABLE 10
SLEP Performance by Sex

Sex	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	17	18.4	6.6	18.3	6.6	36.7	13.0
Male	895	21.1	6.4	20.5	5.8	41.6	11.5
Female	832	21.8	6.5	21.0	5.7	42.8	11.4
Total N	1744	21.4	6.5	20.7	5.8	42.1	11.5

TABLE 11
SLEP Performance by Grade

Grade in School	N	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	Total Score Mean	S.D.
No Response	103	19.5	7.4	18.8	6.5	38.3	12.9
6	4	18.3	10.0	15.5	3.4	33.8	12.4
7	71	21.3	5.9	20.4	5.2	41.8	10.4
8	90	22.1	6.2	21.3	5.7	43.4	11.4
9	442	20.5	6.4	19.6	4.9	40.0	10.6
10	374	20.2	6.4	20.0	5.4	40.2	11.2
11	449	22.8	6.3	22.2	6.2	45.0	11.8
12	211	23.1	5.6	22.4	5.9	45.5	10.7
Total N	1744	21.4	6.5	20.7	5.8	42.1	11.5

TABLE 12
Scaled Scores of Native English Speakers in Grades 7-11

Grade	Listening Comp. Mean	S.D.	N	Reading Comp. Mean	S.D.	N
7th	29.3	1.4	62	29.3	3.0	49
8th	29.6	1.3	48	29.8	4.2	42
9th	29.6	1.6	43	30.8	2.5	41
10th	29.7	3.4	53	32.7	1.2	46
11th	30.0	0.8	50	32.7	1.5	50

Language Proficiency Levels

The Language Proficiency Scale below was developed by the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. It is based on the district's experience administering the SLEP test, the Language Assessment Scales/Level II (LAS II),* and standardized reading tests for native English speakers to limited-English-proficient students at the secondary level. The scale describes the English skills of typical students at each level and discusses score ranges for SLEP, LAS II, and the reading tests for each level. SLEP scores are provided in terms of percentile ranks (see page 20 of this manual). It may be noteworthy that students at the Advanced Proficiency Level generally are at the 70th percentile or above on SLEP. This is equivalent to a scaled total score of about 50-51, which is consistent with the performance of mainstreamed students as indicated in Table 4.

The North East Independent School District scale indicates that some students who score above 50 (scaled total score) may still experience difficulty succeeding in academic classes. Although this difficulty may be due to reasons not related to language proficiency (motivation, aptitude, study habits, etc.), it may also be due in part to deficient English language skills. While the district's scale and proficiency levels do not necessarily apply to English language programs in other locations, it is included here since it may offer additional guidance to test users in interpreting performance on the SLEP test.

*The Language Assessment Scales (LAS), Grades 2-5 (LAS I) and Grades 6 and up (LAS II). The LAS are a comprehensive oral language assessment measure that aims to provide "an overall picture of language proficiency based on a student's performance on four linguistic subsystems." The subsystems assessed are the phonemic system (sounds); the lexical system (words); the syntactic system (rules for sentence construction); and the pragmatic system (ability to carry out tasks using language).

Language Proficiency Scale

Beginner Proficiency Level
Students speak and/or understand no English. Students are too limited in English to be administered language assessment tests, but if the tests are administered, the students score 0 (below 52) on LAS II and below 23 percent on reading and language arts sections of a standardized achievement test appropriate to the students' grade level. Student percentile rank on both sections of SLEP is generally 20 or below.

Elementary Proficiency Level
Students speak and/or understand little English. Although students may know some words in English, they are unable to construct sentences to express their own thoughts. Students generally score 0 (below 52) on the LAS II and below 23 percent on reading and language arts sections of a standardized achievement test appropriate to the students' grade level. Student percentile rank on both sections of SLEP is generally 30 or below.

Low Intermediate Proficiency Level
Students speak and/or understand some English. They can construct sentences, but must be conscious of the processes to do so; their control of structure is inadequate and of vocabulary is minimal. Students generally score 1 (52-61) or 2 (62-71) on the LAS II and below 23 percent on reading and language arts sections of a standardized achievement test appropriate to the students' grade level. Student percentile rank on both sections of SLEP is generally between 30 and 50.

High Intermediate Proficiency Level
Students speak and understand English but have difficulty performing ordinary classwork in English. They can construct sentences to express their own ideas and needs, but their control of structure and vocabulary is limited. Students generally score 2 (62-71) or 3 (72-81) on the LAS II and may approximate or slightly exceed the 23 percent on reading and language arts sections of a standardized achievement test appropriate to the students' grade level. Student percentile rank on both sections of SLEP is generally between 50 and 70.

Advanced Proficiency Level
Students speak and understand English but have difficulty succeeding in academic classes. This difficulty is related at least in part to the students having a primary language other than English, although some of these students may now be English dominant. Students generally score 3 (72-81), 4 (82-91), or 5 (92-100) on the LAS II and below 23 percent or between 23-40 percent on reading and language arts section of a standardized achievement test appropriate to the students' grade level. Student percentile rank on both sections of SLEP is generally 70 or above.

Relationship Between SLEP and TOEFL

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is generally taken by nonnative speakers of English who wish to study at colleges and universities in the United States or Canada, whereas the SLEP test is designed to assess the English proficiency of nonnative speakers at the secondary school level. **SLEP is not a substitute for TOEFL;** it contains different types of questions and has a lower difficulty level. However, many SLEP examinees may be completing their high school studies and preparing to enter community colleges, four-year colleges, or universities where TOEFL scores are utilized for admission decisions. For this reason a study was undertaken to ascertain the relationship between SLEP and TOEFL scores. The results of the study, described below, are intended to give a general idea of how prepared an individual might be to take the TOEFL test given various achievement levels on the SLEP test.

In this study, Form 1 of the SLEP test and a form of the TOEFL test were given in the fall of 1986 to 172 nonnative English speakers who were in English language institutes at four colleges in the United States. The means and standard deviations of the scaled scores obtained by this group on the SLEP and TOEFL tests are given in Table 13.

TABLE 13

Means and Standard Deviations of SLEP and TOEFL Scaled Scores

Score		Mean	Standard Deviation
SLEP	Listening Comprehension	26.7	3.5
SLEP	Reading Comprehension	28.2	3.9
SLEP	Total Score	54.9	6.8
TOEFL	Listening Comprehension	55.3	6.4
TOEFL	Structure and Written Comprehension	51.3	7.4
TOEFL	Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension	49.2	7.0
TOEFL	Total Score	519	63

Compared to the TOEFL norms for the total group, the mean total score obtained by this group falls at about the 57th percentile. The mean total score obtained by this group on the SLEP test, however, falls near the 80th percentile in the SLEP norms table. The SLEP test, constructed to measure the English language proficiency of nonnative English speakers at the secondary school level, was designed to be an easier test than TOEFL. That this college-level group found SLEP easier than TOEFL is evidence supporting the construct validity of the SLEP test.

Table 14 shows the correlations between SLEP and TOEFL section scaled scores and total scores.

TABLE 14

Correlations Between SLEP and TOEFL Scores (N = 172)

TOEFL Scores	SLEP Scores: Listening Comprehension	Reading	Total Score
Listening Comprehension	.74	.80	.84
Structure and Written Expression	.49	.72	.67
Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension	.54	.79	.73
Total Score	.65	.85	.82

The observed Pearson product-moment correlation between SLEP Listening Comprehension section scores and TOEFL Listening Comprehension scores was .74, and the correlation between SLEP Reading Comprehension scores and TOEFL Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension section scores was .79. SLEP Reading Comprehension scores were more highly correlated with the TOEFL scores on all sections than were the SLEP Listening Comprehension scores. The correlation between the total scores on both tests was .82. These results indicate that the SLEP and TOEFL tests are, to some extent, measuring common English language proficiency skills, and this provides partial evidence for the concurrent validity of the SLEP test.

Table 15 presents the observed Pearson product-moment correlations among SLEP and TOEFL part scores. Of the four part subscores of the Listening Comprehension section of the SLEP test, Extended Conversations correlates consistently highest with TOEFL Section 1 (Listening Comprehension) subscores, while Dictation exhibits the lowest correlations. Among the four part subscores of Section 2 (Reading Comprehension) of SLEP, the correlations with TOEFL Section 3 (Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension) subscores are highest for Cloze, and lowest for Cartoons. Correlations among subscores within sections purporting to measure the same skills on both tests are generally higher than those among subscores on sections purporting to measure different skills. Scores on the cloze items, however, appear to be quite highly correlated with all TOEFL subscores.

TABLE 15
Correlations Between SLEP and TOEFL Part Subscores
(N = 172)

			SLEP							
			Section 1 Listening Comprehension				Section 2 Reading Comprehension			
	Section		One Pic.	Dict.	Map	Ext. Conv.	Cart.	Four Pict.	Cloze	Lit. Pass.
TOEFL	I	Statements	0.53	0.42	0.58	0.69	0.36	0.57	0.73	0.52
		Dialogues	0.53	0.38	0.49	0.66	0.33	0.56	0.70	0.49
		Minitalks	0.47	0.36	0.48	0.61	0.36	0.57	0.68	0.51
TOEFL	II	Structure	0.19	0.30	0.42	0.38	0.28	0.54	0.69	0.58
		Written Exp.	0.23	0.41	0.49	0.39	0.25	0.42	0.64	0.57
TOEFL	III	Vocabulary	0.38	0.42	0.46	0.52	0.29	0.62	0.77	0.60
		Read. Comp.	0.19	0.27	0.43	0.41	0.24	0.45	0.66	0.61

Approximate SLEP and TOEFL score equivalents were computed from the data of the 172 examinees who took both tests. For certain points along the SLEP scale, Table 16 gives the TOEFL total scaled score that would be expected given the corresponding SLEP total scaled score.

For example, an examinee who obtains a SLEP total score of 53 might be expected to achieve a TOEFL score of approximately 500 should he or she also take the TOEFL test. Since SLEP is the easier test, the SLEP score of 53 falls at around the 75th percentile, while the TOEFL score of 500 is only at the 45th percentile.

In conclusion, although a relationship exists between performance on the SLEP test and the TOEFL test, the two instruments are not equivalent measures to be used interchangeably.

TABLE 16
SLEP and TOEFL Score Equivalents

SLEP Total Scaled Score	Expected TOEFL Total Scaled Score
64	600
58	550
53	500
47	450
42	400
37	350
31	300

Additional Factors To Consider In Using SLEP Scores

A school that uses SLEP scores should consider certain factors in evaluating an individual's performance on SLEP and in arriving at SLEP score requirements that are appropriate for the institution. The following guidelines are presented to assist schools in arriving at reasonable decisions.

- **Base the evaluation of a student's readiness to begin academic work on all available relevant information, not solely on SLEP scores.**

  SLEP measures an individual's ability in several areas of English language proficiency. The test is not designed to provide information about scholastic aptitude, motivation, language-learning aptitude, and cultural adaptability. However, evidence of an individual's ability on these variables may be available and should be considered when determining an appropriate educational placement.

- **Do not use rigid "cut-off" scores in evaluating a student's performance on SLEP.**

  Because test scores are not perfect measures of a person's ability, the use of rigid cut-off scores should be avoided. The standard error of measurement should be understood and taken into consideration in making decisions about an individual's test performance or in establishing appropriate critical score ranges for the school's academic demands.

- **Consider section scores as well as total scores.**

  The total score on SLEP is based on the scores on the two sections of the test. While a number of students may achieve the same total score, they may have different section scores, which could be significant. For example, a student with a low score on the Listening Comprehension section of the test, but a relatively high score on the other section, may have greater initial difficulty in lecture classes or in situations that depend heavily on comprehension of spoken English. Similarly, it may not be appropriate to place a student with a low score on the Reading Comprehension section in a course that requires a great deal of unsupervised reading.

- **Consider the kinds and levels of English proficiency required in different classes of study and the resources available at the school for improving the English language skills of nonnative speakers.**

  All subjects may not require the same level of language proficiency in order for students to perform acceptably. Students in technical courses may be successful even though their scores are lower than those obtained by students entering courses requiring high verbal proficiency. For instance, mathematics may require a lesser degree of English language proficiency than social studies.

- **Consider SLEP scores in interpreting a student's performance on other standardized tests.**

  Students with limited English-speaking ability are frequently required to take other standardized tests, such as tests of reading skills, intelligence, and general achievement. In such cases, SLEP scores may be helpful in interpreting the scores obtained on other tests. If an individual's SLEP scores are low and the score on another test is also low, one can legitimately infer that performance on the other test was impaired because of deficiencies in English.

Confidentiality of Scores

Scores obtained by persons taking the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test should be released by the institution administering the test only with the informed consent of the individuals. Under federal privacy legislation, institutions are obligated to maintain data about an individual, such as test scores, on a secure basis and to limit access to such data to authorized recipients. Each student should be informed that certain faculty members and others directly concerned with the student's education may have access to this information. Summary data or combined data for groups of examinees should be released with discretion to appropriate groups or agencies and only for the purpose intended.

Local Validation Studies

The establishment of appropriate standards of language proficiency for placement through the use of SLEP scores can have a favorable effect on the success rate of nonnative English speaking students. However, such standards should be supported by the collection of data based on the student population in a particular district or at a particular institution. This information may be useful in raising or lowering the standard as necessary.

Institutions that use SLEP scores should collect information on subsequent performance by students who are placed in mainstream classrooms. Scores may be compared to a variety of criterion measures, such as students' ratings of the adequacy of their language skills for study in English, or classroom teachers' ratings of the adequacy of students' language skills. Expectancy tables can be used to show the distribution of performance on the criterion variables for students with given SLEP scores. Thus, it may be possible to

depict the number or percentage of students at each SLEP score level who attain a certain language proficiency rating as assigned by teachers, or who rate themselves as not being hampered by lack of English skills while pursuing a regular program of study. When analyzing and presenting such data, one should take into account the subject in which students are enrolled.

Subscores may also be taken into consideration when studying the validity of SLEP score standards. For courses that require much reading, the Reading Comprehension score may be particularly important. Assessment of the relationship of subscores to the criterion variables can further refine the process of interpreting SLEP scores.

To be useful, data on subsequent performance have to be collected for relatively large numbers of students over an extended period of time. Districts or institutions that have only a small number of nonnative English-speaking students each year, or that have only recently begun to require SLEP scores, may not find it feasible to conduct the recommended studies. In such cases it may be helpful to seek information and advice from those who have more extensive experience with SLEP, to consult the normative data in this manual, or to refer to other studies about the SLEP test. (See References.)

References

Cowell, W. R. "Applicability of a simplified three-parameter logistic model for equating tests." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, April 1981.

This paper reports on a study comparing the effects of three small sample equating models with the linear equating model that was used to equate scores on different forms of SLEP. The three small sample models investigated were a three-parameter logistic model, a simplified item response theory model, and a one-parameter Rasch model. Item data were obtained from examinee responses to 16 SLEP pretest forms administered in the fall of 1979 and from 2 operational test forms administered in 1980 and 1981. The results indicate that differences among the small sample models were very small. Somewhat larger differences were found between small sample and linear equating models for scores in the lower half of the distribution for the Listening Comprehension section.

DeAvila, E., and Duncan, S. "The Language Assessment Scales." San Rafael, CA: Linguametrics Group.

DeBoe, M. "Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) Test." The ORTESOL Newsletter, 6(3), 1983, p. 14.

This review of SLEP focuses on the unusual language tasks required by the test. It concludes that these tasks assess functional understanding more directly than tests that use written or oral passages and comprehension questions. It suggests that SLEP be considered by junior colleges as well as secondary schools.

DiFiore, J. V. "Specifications for a listening-dictation item-type." University of Florida, unpublished master's thesis, 1980.

The author analyzed 56 SLEP multiple-choice dictation items provided by ETS in order to determine the characteristics of discriminating items. The items that functioned best had distractors that resembled their keys in four areas: word position, syntax, semantics, and phonology. Good distractors used the same word as the key at the beginning and at the end of the sentence. They also used parallel syntactic constructions.

Ilyin, D. "Performing it more naturally may make it easier and more accurate." Paper presented at the Fifth Annual Language Testing Research Colloquium, Ottawa, March 1983.

The paper compares the SLEP and Comprehensive English Language Test for Speakers of English as a Second Language (CELT) Listening Comprehension sections in terms of item type, content characteristics, student and teacher reactions, and actual test results based on some 250 adult students. The author concludes that SLEP is a more integrative test containing more natural language tasks, and that it distinguishes better between different instructional levels than the CELT.

Ilyin, D., Spurling, S., Carleton, P., and Seymour, S. "Do older adults do it differently?" Paper presented at the Seventeenth Annual TESOL Convention, Toronto, March 1983.

This paper examines the relationship between cloze and other language proficiency tests and variation in this relationship by age and high school graduation status. The SLEP and several other commercial tests were administered to a group of 257 adult students. SLEP showed the highest reliability of any of the measures. The results suggest that among adult learners, age and formal education influence the configuration of language proficiency.

Siegel, B. "Using an exam as a means not an end in ESL." Northern New England TESOL Newsletter, 3(1), 1983, pp. 1-2.

This test review describes how SLEP can be used as a teaching activity. The author concludes that SLEP is a useful addition to the classroom--far more useful that even the test maker might realize.

Sloan, S. "Let's look at SLEP." Secondary Schools SIG Newsletter, 5(1), 1982, p. 5.

The reviewer describes SLEP and discusses appropriate uses. The review concludes that SLEP is a useful measure of listening and reading that, taken with other data, can help a trained person in planning a language program. (This review also appeared in CATESOL News, August 1982.)

Stansfield, C. "Reliability and validity of the Secondary Level English Proficiency test." System, 12(1), 1984.

This article describes the history of SLEP, the development of the test specifications, and the performance of each item type and the total test during an administration of SLEP to students in several countries. Several innovative formats are discussed, including multiple-choice cloze and multiple-choice dictation. Also reported are the findings of a validity study that involved the analysis of test scores and demographic data for U.S. public school students.

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